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SUBJECT: USG STEPS TO COUNTER EXTRA-JUDICIAL KILLINGS

REF: MANILA 2193 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (U) Extra-judicial killings (EJK) in the Philippines -- notably of leftist activists, journalists, judges, and suspected narcotics traffickers -- remain of high concern to the USG and are increasingly a subject of international media attention. The annual country report on human rights for the Philippines documents this problem in detail, as does ongoing Mission reporting. The Mission is not a passive observer of these human rights violations, but is actively seeking to ensure that the GRP takes the issue more seriously and takes appropriate steps, as described below.

¶2. (SBU) In a June 5 meeting with President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, Ambassador highlighted the problem and urged the President to ensure that those responsible faced justice. President Arroyo expressed her full determination to combat this scourge and to bring to justice all those involved in these crimes, as well as those suspected of crimes who are instead killed. She pledged that her government would redouble its efforts. In a radio address on June 6, the President assured the nation that she had ordered government agencies to take the necessary steps to stop the killings. Ambassador separately raised the matter with Foreign Secretary Romulo to underscore the damaging impact these killings had on the Philippines' international reputation, a point with which Romulo fully agreed. He commented that the Ambassador's public statements on the issue have been helpful. Ambassador has used several recent media interviews to reiterate US concern over this issue and to describe our ongoing dialogues with the GRP at many levels to ensure that the GRP makes progress on this front.

¶3. (SBU) After a coordinated intra-Mission review, we have identified the further steps Mission officers will take in the next few weeks:

- Ambassador will continue to raise this point in her meetings with senior GRP officials, as well as local officials in Cebu and Davao, two cities with high numbers of KJs;
- Ambassador and key members of the Law Enforcement Working Group will discuss in depth with Philippine National Police chief Lomibao in an upcoming introductory meeting;
- JUSMAG chief and other officers will continue to raise the issue with the senior leaders of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, notably to explain the provisions of the Leahy Law and implications for future military assistance;
- Pol/C will meet with the leaders of each of the various Task Forces assigned to investigate the killings to encourage comprehensive and quick action;
- Pol/C will also meet with the chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights, which has publicly condemned the killings in a rare public statement, to determine if there are additional ways the Mission and the Commission could

coordinate activities related to this issue;
-- Pol/C and poloffs will continue to share information with
and convey USG concerns to members of the Philippine Senate
and Congress, as well as GO activists; and,
-- RSO, LEGATT, DEA, and DHS chiefs will convey our concerns
to senior officials of the National Bureau of Investigation
and Philippine National Police, also noting Leahy Law
restrictions.

14. (U) Mission would very much welcome a visit as early as
convenient by DRL A/S Lowenkron as an excellent high profile
opportunity to engage senior Philippine officials on this
issue and to meet with local media in order to reiterate USG
concerns and to urge prompt prosecution of alleged
perpetrators.

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eap/manila/index.cfm>

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Kenney